



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	BGM
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	15 aug until 16 december
Country (exchange)	USA
City (exchange)	Urbana Champaign
University (exchange)	University of Illinois Urbana Champaign
Faculty (exchange)	Psychology and Neuroscience

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Going on an exchange in my opinion is a once in a lifetime experience and an unique chance to live in a foreign country and get to know the culture on a different level then you normally would.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

I wanted to go to a country where I speak the native language, since I think it can really help with getting to know the local people. That did not leave a lot of options. I have gone to an American school before and I really like it so the USA was something that spoke to me. I visited all the different sites of the American universities we could go to and looked at pictures, the UIUC gave me the best feeling so that is why I chose it. Also, UIUC has a big campus, which was perfect to really get the American college life I wanted to experience.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

You have to fly to Chicago O'Hare and from there you can take the greyhound or peoria busses to campus. You could also take the train (Amtrak), which also goes to Champaign. My advice would be to take the Peoria busses since these go directly from the airport and stop in multiple places on and near campus. For greyhound and Amtrak you would have to go to downtown Chicago first take it from there. Both these options only stop at 1 location in Champaign.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Child Psychology	6	Learning about the psychology of children/ young adults from prenatal till 21years.	4	Read some articles and makes tests about it and the lectures
2	Neuroscience of Eating and drinking	6	All the processes of the body where and why when drinking or eating.	5	Only quizzes about the material, but in different forms
3	Children with neurodevelopmental disorders	6	Learn about the different ndd's for children and the effect on them in society	3.5	A lot of group work during the lectures, and some open book tests
4	Mental Health Issues	6	Different mental health issues, from depression to eating disorders etc.	4	Various forms of grading, essays, group work, tests, questionnaires etc.
5					
6					

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

See remarks for examination per course. The levels varied but all able to do with different levels of work. The lesson material varied a lot per course, for some courses you had some quest lectures and for others panels with parents of children with a NDD. Mostly lectures for all courses. The school system is a lot different from the WUR, you need to do homework, which is graded. And the course is split into 4 modules. So the material you need to learn for each test is a lot less then at the WUR.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)

Like most American colleges the professors need to be addressed properly, but when done so they are very approachable. You also get an exchange coordinator, someone you can turn to for all your questions. Americans are very welcoming people, so you also noticed this on campus when wanting to approach local students. There is also a large international community of exchange students.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

The campus is huge, you need at least 40 minutes to walk from one side of campus to the other. This also means that there is a lot to do on campus especially for students. There is one "main street" with lots of little take away restaurants where people love to get there dinner or lunch. There are multiple gyms and pools that you can go to for free (it is paid with your tuition). Laundry facilities are available in the apartment buildings.

5. Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)

You can live in a dorm (typical American experience), but I would recommend finding a apartment on for example smile.com. Since dorm rooms can be very expensive (1500-2000\$ per month) and it is very common to share a room with somebody else. If you find an appartement by yourself rates differ between 300 and 500\$ per month. But you get meal passes if you live in a dorm so you don't have to spend money on food.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

The American culture is very different, they are very welcoming to other people and it can sometimes feel even fake how nice they are. But they all mean very well, which is really nice. They take the car everywhere and everything is huge. For food they like to take out a lot (once or twice a day).

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

For rent I would say 450\$ per month is normal, and then groceries is quite expensive so around 200-300\$ per month. These are the biggest expenses.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

On campus there are busses you can take for free, if you want to leave campus it is a bit harder. There are some forms of public transport to Chicago but not to the other surrounding places. For this you either need to rent a car, or take an uber. (Renting a car with multiple people is probably cheaper). Most apartments are on campus or very close to campus so you can take the busses for free or walk (max 30 min if you are far)

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

For sure Chicago which is 3 hours away by train but very nice. Garden of the gods is very nice to go to in the fall (Indian summer like, with all the different colors). You can also take the train to New Orleans, which is 18 hours. But the train ride is very nice and it has a panorama view point on the train. It is also partly in the night but you can fully extend your chair so you can sleep well. On campus there is also an art museum, and ofcourse the American sports like football and basketball stadiums.

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

We went to go canoeing in Kickapoo, which was very nice and not that far to go to. Also you can go to the Riggs brewery which is a very cosy brewery 10 minute drive of campus.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

Americans like to have take out so "European style restaurants" are hard to find. But it is nice to try all the different take out places on green street (the main street), and taste different types of cuisine. For going out there are some bars, and clubs. All located on green street or around it. Go to quad day which is a day in the beginning where all the different associations present themselves. I signed up for the traveling club, which made it easier to do some trips in the area.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Getting to places was pretty hard sometimes, especially in the beginning. Since it is all based on cars, and as an exchange student you probably don't have a car. But later on we made a friend that owns a car so that made life easier. It is also a possibility to buy a car with some other people so you can share it and use it to see nice destinations. But make sure you trust them since buying a car has some accountability.

What was your best memory abroad?

In the thanksgiving break we went to the westcoast and did a roadtrip for 12 days. This was really nice to go on a big vacation with your friends and see beautiful parts of the USA. Another thing was door county (10 hour drive). This was very beautiful and so worth it. Especially with friends and in fall since the colors are very nice around that time of year.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Jasmijn.ansinger@wur.nl	